

THE QUIVER

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(Drawn by G. J. PINWELL.)

"And charming it was, and Aunt Hartlepool, leaning on Frederica, came to see."—p. 561.

FREDERICA.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "MARY POWELL."

WHEN I first saw Frederica, it seemed impossible to me to like her—not only impossible that I should, but that anybody should. She was at the age when girls are most awkward

and angular: her elbows and shoulder-blades were displeasing to me. Her features were ordinary; her skin milky-white; that sort of whiteness which often accompanies red hair. But her hair was

net red, it was straw-coloured and limp, like Sir Andrew Aguecheek's, which "would not curl by nature." She had no colour to speak of, unless in her lips, like a ripening wild strawberry; her blue-grey eyes had light eyelashes; her brows were so light as to be hardly perceptible. I really am ashamed to dwell so much on any one's outward appearance; I dislike it in books; I know it is not in good taste; only, you see, I am trying to make out a case for myself; and to show why, from the first, I felt it impossible to take to Frederica.

Her dress, again, was injudicious. The days were getting short, and the weather was cold: there was every reason for her wearing something dark, rich, and warm-coloured. But no, she was wearing out a summer barége, merely because it was not worn out already; and she remarked, with all the complacency in the world, that a new, warm lining had made it quite seasonable. This horrid barége, had a running pattern, something like seaweed, of blue and green, on a cream-coloured ground; and it had been washed, or cleaned, or something, and the green had washed out,—out of its proper place and into the other colours; so that it was what one of Miss Bremer's heroines used to call "a water-gruel gown." Though this dress was high, with long sleeves, it showed, as I have already said, the sharp points of her elbows and shoulders: it must be owned that it fitted to a T.

Well, I did not care for Frederica—did not want to look at her again. I tried to forget there was such a person. She was the second daughter. There were many younger ones. The eldest, Harriet, was a fine, handsome girl.

"All that was best of dark and bright
Met in her aspect and her eyes."

Such a contrast! She was going to be married to Mr. Charles Sinclair, and go out with him to India, rather against the wish of her parents; but all that had been overruled before the wedding was fixed, and I was invited to be one of the bridesmaids.

The dresses were to be pretty enough, though very simple—book muslin, with a very little blue ribbon, and white net veils. Rather cold, certainly, for the time of year; it was a pity the wedding could not be put off till the warm weather came; but, there! "pride feels no pain," as Frederica quite merrily observed. I thought, "Poor thing, what can she feel pride about?"

The house was full of brothers, sisters, aunts, and cousins; overflowing with mirth, joking, laughing, talking, and packing up, and receiving beautiful presents, and some very curious ones; others so useless and tasteless! And the cake, and the ring, and the outfit! Oh, there was plenty to

think about. Beneath it all, an undercurrent of sadness. My aunt was in declining health, and very low-spirited; she thought she should never see Harriet again, which, indeed, she never did. I looked accidentally into her dressing-room one morning as I passed the half-open door, and saw her crying sadly; and Frederica holding her hand in both her own, and evidently comforting her. I thought she looked very amiable at that moment.

The next instant, Alice, the third girl, put her head out of Harriet's door, and cried, in an eager undertone, "Eliza! Eliza! she is trying on the orange-flower wreath! Do come and see! it is so charming!"

And charming it was, and Aunt Hartlepool, leaning on Frederica, came to see and admire it too, and settled it with her thin fingers, and kissed Harriet's bright face with motherly affection. They would have made a pretty photograph at that moment, and Frederica would have made a very good foil.

At that pleasant hour called blind man's holiday, we sat in a large semicircle round the bright fire, most of the young ones linked hand in hand, and Harriet sitting between her mother and her lover. Many droll and lively things were said, much nonsense talked, and now and then there was a little *contretemps*. Once, what is called a coffin leaped out of the fire, but Frederica whisked it out of sight, and abruptly said, "Who will cap verses?" After that, some one proposed singing a catch or glee—an amusement the Hartlepoles were very fond of. So we had

"Call Philip 'Flat-nose,' straight he frets thereat,
And yet 'tis certain Philip's nose is flat,"

and

"How's Sophia?" "House o' fire!" "How's Sophia?"

And very prettily their voices harmonised, till George, in his deepest bass, began to grumble forth—

"When shall we three meet again?"

Frederica, who was sitting between him and me, instantly put her hand over his mouth, producing what harp-players call "*sons étouffés*," and said, quite fiercely, "George, how can you?" and the worst of it was, George was so obtuse, he would not immediately take the hint, but went on singing and laughing, behind her fingers, which almost smothered him. And there was his pale mother, with the tears running down her cheeks.

Up to this time, there was a preponderance of ladies over gentlemen. But one or two additions were expected, more particularly "Tom." Tom seemed to be spoken of with such zest, that I expected him to be a grown-up gentleman; instead of which, he was but a stout, broad-built middy of sixteen, with very short hair, and very sunburnt

cheeks. He arrived at length, and came bounce into the schoolroom, where Frederica and I were very busy tying up cards with silver twist.

"Hallo, Frederica!" was his greeting; and what should he do, but actually put his arms round her, and give her a kiss. Positively, she blushed; a sort of blotting-paper-coloured blush; and this was her rejoinder—

"Tom! I admire your assurance."

"All right," said he, cheerfully; "you admire me, and I admire you, so it's just as it should be."

I concluded this was a *façon de parler*, or that he had heard there was usually a good deal of kissing at weddings, and thought he would be in the fashion; but, curiously enough, he did not kiss any one else, except my aunt and the children, so what he meant by it, I was at a loss to conceive; unless, indeed, that he spoke the plain truth when he said he admired Frederica. It must have been so; and the way I account for it is this—which, after all, is simple enough. You see, he was an orphan lad, brought up by his uncle and aunt Hartlepool, who had been at all the expense of his training and outfit, and regarded him quite as one of the family; and, having a warm, honest, grateful heart of his own, it overflowed with affection for them all, especially including Frederica, who, it seems, had always sewn on his buttons, mended his gloves and socks, and moreover, taught him to do so himself; so that her looks went for nothing. And when he joined his ship, she gave him a little compass, no bigger than a seal, to affix to his watch-ribbon; and a little book, about an inch square, with a text for every night in the year. So *that* is how I explain it.

I soon found that this Tom was what George emphatically called him, "a regular brick;" not that I exactly understand the derivation of that term, but we all know how it is applied. He could be both feeling and funny; was as brave as a lion, as active as a squirrel; had moral courage enough to stand being laughed at for refusing to do anything he thought wrong; and really had so much religion in him, though never obtruded, that, if he had not been a sailor, I think he might have been a very good clergyman. All this, in a boy of sixteen, was something uncommon; especially, considering his disadvantages; though he said he had been having advantages all his life.

He seemed to know exactly how my aunt felt, and to pity her, and consider what she was losing, even more than her own daughter Harriet did; but then, Harriet was very much pre-occupied at this time, and living in a kind of dream; and once she put her hand to her forehead, and exclaimed—

"I feel so bewildered; I hardly know where I am, nor what I am doing. I shall be glad when it is all over."

"What! glad when we are parted from one another?" cried Alice, looking at her reproachfully, and taking her hand.

"You know that is not what I mean; but the parting will be dreadful. I feel being drawn two different ways."

"Like an ass between two bottles of hay, as we say in the cockpit," said Tom, saucily. In reply, she put her two hands on his shoulders, and tried to give him a shake, but she did not move him in the least.

"Oh, torn in half by wild horses, I suppose you meant," rejoined he. "I remember a man, in the history of France—"

"Don't let us have any of your horrible stories out of the history of France," interrupted Alice, stopping her ears.

"And this man—"

"Now, Tom!—"

"Was sentenced—"

"Now, Tom!—"

Then they had what he called "a regular scrimmage," and ran to finish it off in the hall.

Well, it was all over at last; and I'm afraid I can give no account whatever of how Frederica looked as a bridesmaid, for I am ashamed to say I was thinking so much of my own appearance, but especially of the bride, that I did not notice her in the least. I remember her coming, with very red eyes, just at last, when George was roaring for us—"The bridesmaids' carriage stops the way!" and saying, "Eliza dear, I fear a pin has caught in my veil behind, and dragged it all awry," and my hastily answering, "Oh, you'll do," because I was settling my own veil at the moment. George and Tom raced round by some back way, and were in readiness to meet us at the vestry door, and then we six bridesmaids walked in procession down the aisle to the church door, and stood, three and three, on each side of it, waiting for the bride, and shivering in the cold; and I wondered if my nose looked rather red. It was too bad of Harriet to keep us so long; and when she came in at last, leaning on her father, it was the most difficult thing in the world, as we fell into order behind, to keep step with her, because she made a step and a stop—a step and a stop—just like Mrs. Crummles, in Charles Dickens's story. Not that I would compare them, on any account; only it just came into my head.

The marriage service is very long—too long, I think: but, perhaps, I shall not think so if my time ever comes. But only think of Frederica. Directly we got back, she was in such a hurry to be with her mamma, that she sprang out of the fly (a two-horse one—they all had white horses and postillions in scarlet jackets), and put her foot (which I admit to be a small one) right

through my dress! To do her justice, she was sorry enough for it, and even cried. I think it was the one drop that made the cup overflow; and I may, for a moment, have looked cross.

All the rest of the day went off like a dream—plenty of health-drinking and speech-making—more than plenty of kissing and crying, just at last. When the bridefolks were fairly off, and I tapped at my aunt's door to inquire how she was, you might have thought, from Frederica's face, that we had had a funeral.

I went home after that. We only exchanged occasional letters, as before, and I did not see the Hartlepoools again for years. Meantime there were grievous changes. Aunt Hartlepool died; and when Harriet learnt the sad news, it afflicted her so, that she nearly died too. Some years passed before I could manage another visit from the North. When I did come up, I thought I might as well make a circuit of visits, and wrote to Frederica, to ask if it would be agreeable to receive me for a few days. She answered me very cordially, begging me to extend my visit to a few weeks; but adding that she feared I should notice a painful change.

When I got there, it was very mournful, certainly, to miss my aunt from her accustomed place, and to notice the sadness with which her name was mentioned; but otherwise, I observed no change at all—everything went on like clock-work. Frederica was a most excellent mistress of the house; her father's right hand, adored by the children, to whom she was governess, beloved and respected by the servants. Alice told me that, owing to a monetary crisis, her father's means had been much curtailed, but that Frederica had made such judicious retrenchments, that they felt hardly any difference; or, at any rate, only such as they bore cheerfully and were the better for. "One may get too fond of creature comforts sometimes," she said; "it is good discipline to have to do without them." I could not exactly enter into that.

I could not help noticing that Frederica's figure had much improved, and that she dressed her hair more becomingly: her face appeared much the same. But, after the first day, I did not think of one or the other—she was Frederica, and that was enough.

I inquired after Tom. "Oh! Tom has been at sea these three years."

"And before he sailed, what do you think he said to Frederica?" said little Mary, merrily. "'Mind you don't change your name before I come back!' Wasn't he a funny fellow?"

That very evening, Mr. Hartlepool said, quite suddenly, "Tom has come back!"

Frederica gave a great start.

"Why did not he come home with you?" cried Alice.

"Well, he knew his own reasons best," said Mr. Hartlepool, dubiously.

"I call that a shame!" cried Alice. "Don't you, Eliza?"

Not a word of remark from Frederica. She felt it, though, I'm sure; and I am equally sure she expected him the next day; and the next, and the next, I knew, by the trifling addition to the dinner, and to her dress, that she thought he would come. But the only thing she said about him was on the third day, in an undertone to Alice:

"I wish papa had not said he had seen Tom, since he neither comes nor writes."

"It is very strange, certainly," said Alice.

Frederica had a bad headache all the evening, and again the next morning. Alice proposed a walk, to which she rather reluctantly assented.

I was lacing my boots near my bedroom window, which was a little open, when the tag of one of my laces came off, and as I had not another at hand, I was obliged to resort to the awkward aid of a bodkin, which made me rather slow. I was getting red in the face with stooping, and had raised myself a moment to ease the crick in my neck, when I heard a long-drawn "Oh!" immediately under my window, that seemed to indicate a complication of emotions—surprise, relief, joy, and a little provocation.

"Yes, here I am at last," said a voice that I knew for Tom's. "Don't I seem dropped from the clouds? Are you not surprised?"

"I was much more surprised at your not coming three days ago," said Frederica, rather rebukingly.

"What! my uncle let the cat out of the bag! Oh, the wretch! after promising so faithfully. Won't I be down on him? What must you have thought of me?"

"I thought you had forgotten us—that was all."

"All? and enough too! Why, my dearest Frederica, I wanted you not to know of my landing till I was able to run down here, because I knew I must be in town a few days first."

"Papa said nothing of that."

"What a shame! He should have told all or nothing. I begged him to keep my counsel, till I knew how things would turn out. They've turned out famously. I'm made! I've passed!"

"Made lieutenant? Oh, Tom, how glad I am!"

"I knew you would be, my darling Frederica, and therefore I wanted to tell you myself. And now, Frederica—"

He dropped his voice, and I was quite convinced he was making her an offer of marriage, so I began to lace my boot very busily, that I might not hear another word. What I did hear her say, however, in a very grave voice, was—

"I have determined, Tom, not to change my name."

Tom was brought short up by this, seemingly, and there was an awkward pause; but it was soon broken by his exclaiming, joyously—

"Why, that's all right; for am not I Tom

Hartlepool? All that I want is that you shall be Mrs. Hartlepool."

"We'll see about that when you are made post," said she, gaily.

And this has come to pass sooner than was expected, and she has married the post-captain.

RUMOURS OF WARS.

WE cannot disguise from ourselves that there is an uneasy feeling pervading Europe. Disguised in despatches, and shelved it may be only for the moment, war!—grim war—seems to be among the manifest *probabilities* of the year. A Peace Exhibition apparently blocks up the way. Actually, it is pleaded that war must be; but that war must wait till the Exhibition year be past. Now there is something in all this so related to the moral state of nations, that we purpose to consider these prognostications of war from the standpoint of Christian men, and to look thoughtfully at the state of this question, in its moral and religious aspects. "To arms! to arms!" that is no cry of ancient days alone. It does not belong only to the seventh century, with its Saracenic conquests; nor to the eighth, with the victories of Charlemagne; nor to the ninth, with its Norsemen and Danish invasions; nor to the eleventh, when there were warlike bishops, who could head some sacred procession in honour of a saint, or head an army of valiant cavaliers against the enemies of the faith, and when the epitaph inscribed on the tomb of a favourite bishop was, "A good priest and brave chevalier"—a century in which the first crusade commenced, and Jerusalem was taken for the time; nor to the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, with the second crusades, up to the eighth and last, accompanied by the savage slaughter of the Albigenses; nor to the fifteenth, when the Wars of the Roses began; nor to the seventeenth, with its stirring contests and its armies of the Commonwealth; nor to the eighteenth, when Napoleon arose awhile to be the master of the world! No; despite the victories of science and the achievements of art, war, cruel war, seems to be the watch-cry of to-day; and "To arms!" has rung again and again through Europe during this nineteenth century! So-called Christian people, such as Russia and Prussia, France and Spain, England and Italy, Denmark and the Duchies, Austria and Holland, have all helped to fill the world with misery and with wrong, with widowhood and orphanage, and with the worst forms of atrocity, rapine, robbery, and guilt!

We cannot shut our eyes to the sorrowful fact,

that war is as popular now as it ever was. The very worst feature of the case is this, that the conscience of the world does not seem to be against it. That might makes right is the patent fact, and to this the world, by its very apathy, says Amen! Meanwhile, there are some moral mistakes in the consideration of this matter which it is well to correct. It is sometimes avowed that long eras of peace make nations effeminate, and help to sink them into conditions of enervating luxury. According to this idea, war is a kind of national tonic, and withal healthy in its influence. I am not about to deny that war may, and often does, bring out high qualities of valour and courage; but I deny that it checks effeminacy or vice. Many of the worst and most odious characteristics of humanity may be blended with mere physical courage and disregard of danger. The camp is not, in modern days, a school for morals; and I question very much if Rome, in her decline, does not attest the fact, that nations may continue valorous in war, whilst they decline in all the elements of moral purity and moral bravery.

Another mistaken idea is this, that war can be undertaken by potentates, and is altogether independent of a Christian people who dwell in the land. It is not so. Monarchs cannot afford in modern Europe to go to war against the sentiments of their people. If *they* were indifferent, or, still more, opposed, wars could not be undertaken. The saddest aspect of the subject is this, that it takes so little to stir up the human heart to a sense of indignation and wrong. A few graphic words, a case cleverly put, with all the opposite facts left out, and the mind is enlisted at once on the side of aggressive war! The pomp and glory of it are still attractive, and the sense of national pride is so strong, that the victories of its arms are warmly cherished as amongst a nation's noblest successes. True, we have a kind of poetic creed which says, "Peace has its victories as well as war;" but they are never so much honoured, or so well paid.

The relation of the war-spirit to the Gospel is manifest enough. Christianity is dead against it. Not only is it antagonistic to the miseries and cruelties which are its results, but to the *spirit*

whence it springs; and it declares that wars and fightings come of our LUSTS. No words can be stronger than these. We may glorify as much as we will the enterprises of war; but they spring of our LUSTS. Christianity cannot be twisted into any sort of alliance with offensive and aggressive war; and *here* is the danger with strong nations. Use what delicate euphemisms of speech we will, our wars in India and China have been offensive and anti-Christian wars; and to this moment we hold these nations only by the throat. They are ours only till they can gather resisting force enough to cast us back.

Principles of defence are born in our very nature; are essential to our security; are the conditions of our life. Insects are armed with protecting sorts of battle-axes, and the sharpest of all sharp swords, which they would never have possessed had the Great Creator not intended them to act upon the defensive. We, too, are furnished with instincts of self-defence, which it is the work of Christianity to regulate and reduce to the obedience of conscience, rather than to eliminate and destroy. This must be admitted by all thoughtful and reasonable men; and so far is it true, that the sturdiest peace-man would find it difficult, and almost impossible, if suddenly attacked, not to start to the defence of property and life. He would, indeed, have no time to consider the *via media* between proper punishment and preservation of the offender's life. He would save himself, or his wife, or his child; and so he ought.

Admitting all this, is it not most manifest that war, in a national sense, under all such circumstances, would be a very exceptional thing, and that it is the great duty of all Christian people to lift up their voices against all wars of ambition, all wars for the addition of territory, all wars for the winning of a first place in Europe? Here are two nations—France and Prussia, the first military powers in Europe. Forthwith it is maintained that no two such military powers can live safely side by side, and some ten or twenty thousand hale and honest men must be slain upon the battle-field, to decide which power shall be supreme for a few successive years.

I say *few* for this reason, that all history teaches us that no empire of the sword long retains its sway. Conflict after conflict, which has made every country in Europe ring with the cry, "To arms!" and red with the blood of warfare, has but shown us this—that supremacy is gained in one century only to be lost in the next. It is the old sorrow of Solomon: Who knoweth whether he that

shall be after me shall be a wise man or a fool? I do not know a much more affecting picture in all history than that of Charlemagne. At the close of his reign, one day, he was looking out on the Mediterranean Sea. Some vessels sailed close to the port. His courtiers told him they were perhaps from the Coast of Africa—perhaps Jewish merchantmen—perhaps, indeed, traders from Britain. Charlemagne leaned against the wall of a room and burst into a passion of tears. "No," said he, "those are not the ships of commerce; I know by the lightness of their movement. They are the galleys of the Norsemen; and though I know such miserable pirates can do me no harm, I cannot help weeping when I think of the miseries they will inflict on my descendants and the lands they shall rule!" Yes! and was he not right? Did not these Scandinavians surprise the world? Proud, then, as a nation may be of imperial conquests, it ought to be prouder far of moral ones; it ought to glory more in its Sunday-schools than in its rifled cannon—more in its moral power and altitude, than of the number of its regiments and the height of its Guards.

Christ prophesied no easy or speedy victory for his religion. He declared, most unequivocally, its final, complete, and universal triumph; but he left clearly on the page of the evangelic record, the fact, that it would be by steady progress, and after the conquest of manifold obstacles. It should be ours to remember, that we shall aid His cause by contributing our quota to the national feeling! We should not be so craven-hearted as to shrink from our duty as citizens; and, above all, we should remember the absolute religiousness of the duty which calls us to protest against wars of conquest, and conflicts, which, whilst they aggrandise a nation by increase of territory, weaken it by loss of moral power. Some Christian people seem to think that, if they go to church or chapel, and sing, and read, and pray, that is all they have to do with Christianity. It is not so. They ought to let it influence them in all matters, civil and political, remembering that they are enjoined in God's own Word, to act the citizen as it becometh the Gospel of Christ. This is the age of standing armies—emphatically so; and war brings promotion and glory. It is difficult, under such circumstances, to prevent the fanning of the breeze when a war-spirit is enkindled, even though Congress stifle it for a moment. But we must do our best; and he is unworthy, both of the name of citizen and Christian, who does not weigh the matter well, and utter his own manly protest against every unnecessary sacrifice of human life.

WALKING WITH NATURE.

WITHOUT writing a treatise upon the subject of walking, the merits of the exercise having been established from time immemorial, a few words at least may be said of how differently persons are affected during that exhilarating process—affected, be it understood, merely as regards their observations of outer Nature—many of whom, possessing but limited ideas of beauty, are disposed to a sort of self-congratulatory applause, in having found that nothing produces so many agreeable results as a brisk, cheerful walk: the limbs are invigorated, complexion is brightened, spirits are improved, and, above all, an excellent appetite for dinner, sends them home in good humour, determined to enjoy the good things of life.

But what have these comforted souls seen? We presume an exercise productive of so much satisfaction to have been taken in the country. Rural scenes, however simple, are never wanting in that indefinable something, which real lovers of Nature take, see, and inwardly digest. These observers are not numerous. The jocose, hilarious spirit that sets forth on its rambles, does so very much after the manner of a dog, who goes straight forward, without aim or object, other than that which his animal nature suggests, which is to snuff the fresh air and enjoy the freedom naturally felt in being able to take his own way—and so goes forth rejoicing. Of course such persons are not aware of what they lose by merely regarding exercise as a healthful pastime for limbs and appetite, nor is there any known means of making them take higher views of it. "Eyes have they, but they see not: ears have they, but they hear not." Nature, with its manifold beauties of sight and sound, makes no impression: it is as a closed book. How far this impermeable indifference can be carried, had better remain unknown: neither benefit nor pleasure can be derived by associating with the dull and unimpassionable. We believe there is no theory by which observation of Nature can be made an art. It is a gift from heaven, wherein lies the germ of that poetical perception, which with some becomes uttered poetry, and with others remains but an enjoyable power of understanding its interpretations. Of those readings, often so beautifully rendered, that show how, from the beginning of the world, outward Nature was the link binding, in its purest condition, man's spirit with the invisible world, no higher example can be found than in the Bible.

Nature there takes its place as the work of God, and is regarded by the Jewish writers in a spirit

of holiness not better known to the Christian world. Not only, indeed, were the Hebrews a highly poetical race, but their inspiration was in many cases laid upon them by God himself. As his "Spirit moved upon the waters," and life entered all things, so much the more at his pleasure would it quicken the souls of his prophets to the utterance of the fittest and most beautiful words, to which they added natural images; those held in the highest esteem being such as have a typical sense, and are now worn on the tablets of our hearts full of their significance of a glorious future. This interest in exterior Nature gave great power to the particular culture for which these poets were remarkable. Offices of command were enhanced, and authority unquestioned, when placed in the hands of persons of high accomplishment. To have been "learned in all the arts of the Egyptians," without these accessories drawn from a knowledge of Nature, would have left even such a man as Moses weak as a singer of inspired song, but thus strengthened, he drew chords with a masterly hand, and gives in his strophes of praise a picture of local beauty, not the less pleasing because its images are the most simple. Perhaps an example, familiar as it may be to every one, will not be inappropriate to the object we have in view—that of impressing upon those who have the power of reading Nature, not to neglect it;—and mark well, how minute in its notice of common things was the eye of this poet, and how, understanding the enjoyment of life, he values what preserves it,—not only preserves it, but what gives to it its character, its beauty, its significance:

"My doctrine shall drop as the rain, my speech shall distil as the dew, as the small rain upon the tender herb, and as the showers upon the grass." How well Moses understands the meaning of the mercy he extols—the effect of it upon God's own works: the rain, the dew, the showers—this triune blessing upon the dry ground, over land parched and exhausted by the scorching heat of the sun. May it not be taken in another sense, typically to ourselves—consumed by the evil of sin, but restored by that triune agreement of mercy, love and the Spirit, giving us through the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost?

Having evoked from Nature so much meaning, to follow the footsteps of the Law-giver may in this respect be within the reach of all. Nor are there wanting examples of this walking with the Spirit, in places where concerns of the world and strife with sin might have almost choked it.

Early lessons are never forgotten. Terrible is the result of evil example. In one moment

an impure thought may, by reckless utterance, become for ever the occupant of a hitherto untainted breast, not again to be cast forth; for, rising up unbidden, it will torment its unwilling recipient to the end of his days.

Was David so called away from the paths of pure life? Sin lay a strong hold over this man: his communings with Nature are evidences often-times of a broken and contrite heart, that awakened in him a power of meditation unexampled in its earnestness and poetic bearing. Not in so few words, or with imagery so simple, has any other mouth given utterance to a finer combination of beauty and strength than his. When singing the mercy of the Almighty, he says: "Who coverest thyself with light as with a garment: who stretchest out the heavens like a curtain: who layeth the beams of his chambers in the waters: who maketh the clouds his chariot: who walketh upon the wings of the wind: who maketh his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire." There can be no doubt the peculiar gravity of the Hebrew character arose from the fact that these people looked upon themselves as the servants of God. This conviction naturally elevated their minds to a constant state of holiness, making them fit instruments for the purposes of Heaven. Ignorant of such influence in our own lives, we approach Nature with feelings and motives different in many respects from theirs. Love of art forms a great part of our admiration; the domestic element lives in much we see before us: it is associated with our families, the places of our youth, "the old roof-tree," and a number of home circumstances, which at once and for ever form the foundation of local attachment. In this there is a common faith; but when art—its mysteries, its practice—helps to the interpretation of Nature, then our love rises to enthusiasm. She unfolds her beauties in a thousand ways: light and shade, colour, perspective, aerial distance, composition, effect, crowd their difficulties upon the senses. In contemplating what can be taken from her, a sudden change comes over the scene; higher feelings arise to assist the lingering thoughts. The incomparable work of creation, untrammelled from the limitations of earthly sight, lies clear, simple, unapproachable. The hand that would attempt to delineate feels powerless; silent admiration takes its place, and Nature is seen to be an impossible acquisition: through the medium of painting, a vain delusion—through that of poetry, but a feeble echo of the truth.

This feeling is consistent with the power of genius. Genius is always humble. The more it is capable of appreciating beauty and intrinsic worth, the less likely is it to be satisfied with its own endeavours. Consequent to this, there comes strength; that which proceeds from perseverance

and hard study, until perfection is acquired: and by universal consent a landscape-painter is found to give the delight to others which he hardly feels himself, and from the bosky woods of art, the walks and lanes that leave so much to the imagination, the far-off sky and transparent depths of foliage, we see how the right hand has acquired its cunning; the modest reverent spirit receiveth its reward, by being permitted to enter into the joys of creation, and to give to art the power of truth.

It must be acknowledged that pictures conceived without poetical emotion are rarely interesting. Mechanical beauty fails to excite any feeling but that of wonder at its skill. Therefore, poetry is essential to high art; we can see it in the most simple compositions—such as have sprung from some silent stream in the presence of Nature; not a photographic portrait, where each feature stands out by itself, but one of those mysterious productions, where all things meet together beneath some one strong influence—such as sunset or morning dawn, a representation of the affinity of objects with one another, colour with distance, aerial motion with sky and clouds, streams of light apportioned by the happy appointment of Nature, rendered truthful by the fortunate results of art, under the control of experienced observation and accomplished skill.

We feel in offering these few remarks that honour is due to the names of two artists, whose works have come as near Nature as it is possible; and, although well known, we scarcely think they have been sufficiently acknowledged by critics of art. Why is Mr. Ruskin silent upon the Linnells?

There is nothing in our daily life on which exterior Nature does not exert its influence. The common air, the sunshine, the ever-varying clouds above our heads, are combinations nothing can disturb—simple prelude to that more intense enjoyment, received when fairly in the midst of some beautiful scene, to which, with faithful memory, we turn at those moments when external circumstances limit our pleasures to the circumscribed enjoyments of air, cloud, and sun. But in all things have we fulness. So be it with regard to understanding the works of God. The greatest minds, it has been shown, made it their delight to contemplate the majesty of Nature; and although, as we remarked above, that observation of it, in the true spirit of love and reverence, cannot become an art, we believe too many opportunities are thrown away, when young children and thoughtless youth might be instructed to use their eyes with purpose towards this end. Children—always ready to admire flowers, and revel on the grass—might easily be made to comprehend the higher beauties of the picturesque—impressions that would never leave them, but,



(Drawn by R. T. PRITCHETT.)

“ See, all the coast
Is wan and stricken with the misty gale.”—p. 570.

growing in sweetness with their years, combine with the important lessons of revealed religion, to make life, when "the days are dark and dreary," bright with the hopes of that better land, belief in

which can no more be taken from us, than that the Lord would keep back dew from the grass of the field, and the glory of the earth should perish in undue season.

SEA THOUGHTS.

Go thou and stand,
And take the buffets of the surly wave,
Where the foam-fringed limits of the
land
Gird round the seaman's grave.

See, all the coast
Is wan and stricken with the misty gale;
And canst thou, master of the moment, boast
Thou dost in aught prevail?

Eneath yon sea
How many thousands of thy kind are still!

And all the millions of the earth that be
Could not its hunger fill.

Where is thy strength?
Where is the power of thy thought to make
One billow shorten of his hoary length,
Or ere his purpose break?

What trifles we!
What dust, blown vaguely from the feet of
Time!
But the one yearning for eternity
Turns us to things sublime.

J. S. W.

THE HALF-SISTERS.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "DEEPDALE VICARAGE," "MARK WARREN," ETC.

CHAPTER XVIII.

VEEP silence fell upon the guests of the Trenthams. The door had been thrown open by the fictitious butler, hired for the occasion, in imitation of the Chillinghams; and, in the doorway, one fairy foot on the threshold, stood Dolores. Some of the persons present had seen her before, and to behold her a second time had come again. Others gazed at her with open undisguised admiration—this little brown girl, whose sister did plain sewing for Mrs. Chillingham!

Almeria saw her mistake; she saw it in the heightened colour, the eager look, of Archibald Cranstead. It flashed upon her, with a fearful train of consequences: but it flashed too late!

The satin slippers were bearing Dolores right onward towards the point of danger.

Dolores, fluttering her fan, with all the bewitching arts of a Spanish beauty!—Dolores, her face dimpled over with its sunniest smile!—Dolores, her whole artillery of blandishments in full force! And what did Almeria possess with which to withstand them? What were her ordinary looks, her ordinary manners, against these? The sparrow, as compared to the humming bird of the tropics!

Still, something must be done. It would not do to be outwitted in the very beginning. She must make some kind of effort to save her hopes from being utterly shipwrecked. Sorry hopes, truly! built on such a foundation as Archibald Cranstead!

She hurried forward to meet Dolores, her face wearing a perfidious smile.

"I am glad to see you, my dear! How late you are!"

"Am I?" said Dolores, carelessly, her bright eyes drinking in with girlish glee the homage of all around her.

"Yes, indeed you are, and mamma wants to speak to you. Will you come to mamma?" urged Almeria, eager to get her away from the dangerous precincts of Archibald.

"Thank you. I will go presently," replied Dolores, coolly, and flashing her large southern eyes full on Archibald.

A vengeful expression came over the face of Almeria. But she could not crush the radiant creature she had admitted. She could not compel the queen of the evening—such Dolores would inevitably become—to stir one inch if she were not so minded.

The flashing look had not been lost on Archibald. He returned it with one of open admiration, and also, strange to say, of recognition.

Recognition! Then these two had met before! He put out his hand eagerly. His whole face was changed. There was in it that which Almeria had never seen before—a spark of genuine enthusiasm.

"Miss Percival! it must be, it could be no other." Dolores gave a coquettish toss to her superb little head.

"I am sure, Mr. Cranstead, I never thought of seeing you again. How funny!" and she gave one of those silvery peals of laughter which were in themselves a kind of music.

"But you know I came to England on purpose because you came," said Archibald, in a low tone; "how could I stay in Spain when you had left it?"

"Dear me! I am sorry you should have taken all that trouble," said Dolores, with supreme indifference, and sitting down in the most careless attitude on a

settee close by—a settee which held only two persons. "Pray have you got your violin put into tune yet? My ears ache now at the thought of how badly you used to play;" and, with her fan, she performed a series of fascinating manœuvres quite unknown in our prosaic clime.

It was too late! Almeria might have prevented such a catastrophe, had she been quick enough; but in another moment Archibald had taken his place on the settee, and she—she who fancied he was her lover—stood silent and neglected. After that, he had no eyes, no ears, for any but Dolores.

"You see you were wrong," whispered Georgina, as her sister retreated, unable to hold her ground against such a rival. "You should have listened to me."

"The odious little creature!" cried Almeria, spitefully, "I will never let her come into the house again!"

"That will not matter, now you have been good enough to introduce them to each other. See!"

The harp on which Dolores had been accustomed to perform was brought forward, and placed in the middle of the room. Dolores, surrounded by a train of admirers and flatterers, was asked to sing.

But, though many were crowding round her, though she was the centre of attraction, and the acknowledged belle of the evening, Archibald held his place beside her. It was Archibald, who, with a gallantry that had scarce a precedent in his whole history, led her to the harp; it was he who placed her music; it was he who stood over her, oblivious of all else. If a straw had laid in her path, he would have stooped and picked it up.

If, in olden days, music could change the nature of savage beasts, and the very trees, and rocks, could bow themselves, love can, at times, work miracles even as great as these. And Archibald Cranstead, as far as in him lay, loved, and passionately, too, Dolores Percival.

He had loved her in her own land, amid the orange and citron groves of the South; he had, so to say, worshipped the very ground she trod upon.

She had never returned his affection a single atom. She had been wilful and capricious as the winds that rambled over the Aeolian harp she had placed in her balcony. Yet, despite all the rebuffs he had met with, he had come to England, in the faint, uncertain hope of finding her.

Now he had found her. And Almeria: he would have thought it an impertinence even to be reminded of her existence.

Dolores was standing beside her harp. With a coquettish air she took off her gloves, and gave them to Archibald. However she might amuse herself with tormenting him, and making him smart with the stings of her little sharp sarcasms, he was allowed, for that evening at least, to be her cavalier. To-morrow, perhaps, she would not condescend to speak to him.

Turning her eyes upward, with a look of inspiration, her face glowing with enthusiasm, she struck

out a few notes of marvellous clearness and sweetness. This was by way of prelude. Then she began to sing.

She sang of her own land—of the gardens and the myrtle-trees—of the merry maidens with lute and mandoline—of the blue sky and the winds of the South, and every verse was ended, with a sweet and delicious intonation not to be described, by the words, "Sunny, sunny, Spain!"

It was her own song. She had written it herself. There was a kind of erratic poetry in the soul of Dolores.

When she had finished, amid all the loud and prolonged applause, it was Archibald who led her to her seat. Archibald, who never for one single moment during the whole evening quitted her side.

"I have done for myself, that is all!" exclaimed Almeria, tearing the flowers from her hair, in the solitude of her chamber, and scattering them on the floor. "He will go to-morrow and ask her to marry him!"

CHAPTER XIX.

Joyce went slowly back to the house. He had a painful task before him, and one he scarce knew how to accomplish. It had been easy to tell Dolores, but how could he wound the tender faithful heart of Helen? He had decided, in his own mind, to go to India. The advantages of such a step had been pressed upon him in a second interview with Squire Cranstead. He had dwelt upon them incessantly, in his own imagination, until they had overcome all impediments. He had earnestly wished to do right, and it seemed as if it must be right to avail himself of an opening made, as the squire assured him, by the hand of Providence.

The interest taken by the master of Cranstead in his welfare, appeared to Joyce the only fortunate circumstance that had ever happened to him.

He had made up his mind to go to India; and if he did so, there would be no time to lose. He would have to run up to London to-morrow, and make arrangements with Mr. Solly's agent. There would be a hundred things to be done and thought of. The vessel sailed a month sooner than he expected; it left the shores of England in just one fortnight. Just one fortnight was all that interposed between himself and a separation of five long years from Helen!

Joyce had not yet told her his decision. He had come to-night on purpose, and was only waiting till Dolores had been started off on her visit.

He knew that Helen was very anxious. He saw it in her careworn brow, and the sad wistful eyes that met his. There were haggard lines in her face, that no sorrow had planted there before. There was a restlessness, a feverish impatience to be alone with him, and to hear what he had to say, by no means characteristic of Helen: and these things smote the young man to the heart. When he caught sight of her standing in the doorway, regardless of the bitter wind and driving snow, he felt as if, even now, the

trial would be too severe;—yea, as if the very wealth he was about to seek, would be dearly purchased by Helen's tears!

He took her hand, and led her within doors. She was shivering with cold, and he put a shawl round her, and drew her to the fire. They were both standing, now, over it.

She held his hand tightly, with a kind of convulsive clasp. He knew, too well, what it meant. He knew, also, that he must not keep her in suspense any longer.

"Helen," he began, "I have thought over it, and, dearest, I have prayed over it. Helen, I think I ought to go."

He spoke in the low tender tone he was wont to use to her. She shivered a little, and nestled closer to him. The grasp in which she held his hand tightened.

"Helen! my own love! I will give it up even now, at your wish. But, when I think how soon those five years will be gone, it seems as though we were putting from us a happy and a successful future. We are both young. Tell me, Helen, what I ought to do."

She did not speak. Her heart had a faint, sickening sensation. She knew that he must go. She knew the dreadful shadow which had fallen upon her was the forerunner of a grief, such as she had never yet imagined. She had never even imagined a separation from Joyce!

"There is only one other way, Helen. You know how happy, how blessed, it would make me;" and he drew her still closer to him.

"What is it, Joyce?" and she looked up through her tears.

"Go with me, dearest, as my wife. Let us meet this hopeful future together. If you could—"

"But you know I cannot—you know I will not!" cried Helen, sharply, as though her anguish was too sore upon her. "God forbid I should so stray from what is right for me to do! I will never leave my father!"

"I know it, Helen! I know it," he replied, sadly; and then they both stood silent.

After a time, Helen raised her head, and tried to resume some kind of composure. She was not used to give way. Her nature was very brave and resolute. She raised her head, thinking she would speak cheerfully, and not inflict upon him needless pain. But when her eyes met those dear eyes, fixed upon her with such tenderness and pity—when she felt how all she had of sympathy, or affection, came from him, and how this gulf of separation would swallow it up, and leave her life a blank—then it was too much; her efforts at self-restraint gave way, and she burst into a passionate fit of weeping.

His heart again smote him bitterly. He soothed, he caressed her; he assured her he would give up all idea of leaving her. She had but to say the word, and he was at her side for ever—that is, until death should part them. He thought his words had some effect—that she had grown calm—and so she had;

but it was not because of what he said. It was because her calm, self-denying nature had re-asserted itself. She knew, even while he spoke, that he must go. She had no thought of blighting his prospects, by urging him to remain. She even blamed herself for yielding to her uncontrollable grief. She was resolved to get the mastery over herself.

"You must not heed me, Joyce," said she, trying to speak cheerfully. And then her voice began again to fail her, as she asked—her heart sickening with the same deadly pain—when it was to be, this terrible rending of them asunder; when Joyce was to go.

He was afraid to tell her. He knew she did not expect the blow to be so sudden. She had to ask a second time, ere he could falter out the words—

"In a fortnight, Helen."

She trembled, and her lip quivered. Still she was comparatively calm. She was resolved not to give way again.

"I shall try to see you once more, Helen."

Again a little shudder, and a turning away her face.

"I must be in London to-morrow. I have much to attend to and arrange. Still, I shall run down the night before the vessel sails, to—"

She had bowed herself nearly to the earth. Her face was hidden in her hands. The interview was trying her past her strength. He saw it was. He thought it would be kindness for him to retire. He would try to see her in the morning, if it were possible. His own heart was racked with anguish. He bent over her, and whispered a prayer that God would comfort and sustain her; then he went. It was more merciful to go, than to stay. He went noiselessly; in her paroxysm of mental grief she did not hear him.

Presently, she raised her head, and looked hastily round. When she saw he was gone, she uttered a kind of wail, and stretched out her arms, the tears streaming down her face. The sight of the deserted room, the empty chair, the utter blank desolation, was too much; she sunk on her knees, and for a time remained, indulging in another passionate flow of weeping. If this had lasted, I think Helen must have died.

But it did not last—at least, not in all its intensity. Even in this depth of woe, the principle of Christianity, so divinely consoling, came to her relief. The thought of Him, who is essentially the "Comforter," dropped some balm into her cruel wounds. He would be still her Friend—the "Friend that sticketh closer than a brother." Over these stormy, perilous seas, He would conduct and guide her: she could not be utterly forsaken. In even this fiery trial, some way would be made for her escape.

With Helen, religion was no empty profession. In her hour of woe and desolation, she could lean upon it, and find comfort. God was her refuge and strength: "a very present help in time of trouble."

CHAPTER XX.

"HELEN—Helen! what have you been thinking of? and the fire is out, and no supper; and the door unfastened; and I'm—oh! so perished with cold!"

Helen, from a dream in which she and Joyce were, after their long separation, just happily united, woke up, to have vividly before her, a pink figure, with long tresses of raven hair, now slightly ruffled, and two bright half angry eyes, which were regarding her with anything but approval.

"When papa said you were to have everything comfortable, and to see that I went to bed warm!" continued Dolores, surveying the empty grate with a look of extreme dissatisfaction. "Of course, I shall catch my death of cold."

Helen got up hastily; she had fallen asleep from utter weariness, as she sat watching for her sister.

"I am very sorry, dear; I was tired, and dropped off into a doze before I was aware. I will light the fire in a minute. It is not quite out."

"Is there a good fire in papa's room, Helen?"

"Yes; but he is asleep. Don't disturb him, Dolores. See, I have made a blaze already. We shall have a famous fire in a few minutes. Sit down in that chair just in front, and put your feet on the fender."

"I think you might have managed better," grumbled Dolores, placing herself in the warmest position she could find, the toes of her shining little slippers pointed direct at the fire.

"Have you had your supper, Dolores?"

"Not exactly. Of course, I had a little supper. But oh! it was such fun!" and Dolores, whose careless good humour was fast returning, laughed merrily to herself.

"You would like something more to eat, perhaps?"

"Yes, I should, Helen, if there is anything nice in the cupboard."

"There is a bit of cold fowl left."

"That will do; give it me quick, Helen, in the dish with the gravy. I will eat it on my lap. And Helen, I don't know whether you will let me have any of papa's wine, I am so very cold!"

Helen hesitated a moment. Then she took out the bottle, and looked at it, somewhat anxiously. After a short pause, she poured out a glass, and mixing it with water, put it in a saucpan over the fire, with a little spice and sugar; all which arrangements were regarded with great satisfaction by Dolores.

"That's right, Helen! how nice it will be! It will warm me through and through! Kiss me, Helen."

"Have you enjoyed yourself, Dolores?" said Helen, having quietly done so.

"Oh, yes! very much indeed! It has been such glorious fun!" and Dolores gave another peal of silvery laughter.

"Did you sing, dear?"

"Oh, yes! I sang; and I danced twelve dances running."

Helen regarded her with an expression of pain and anxiety.

"And whom did you dance with, Dolores?"

"Oh, ever so many gentlemen wanted to and were so angry, because he would not let them."

"He! who was *he*?" asked Helen, gravely and anxiously.

"Give me the wine, Helen. It is quite hot. How nice it is!" and she smacked her rosy lips with an air of keen enjoyment.

"About the gentleman you danced with, dear, who was *he*?"

"Oh, just nobody at all! such an ugly old fright!"

"Old?" repeated Helen, puzzled.

"Well: he was not really old, only he was so ugly." Helen still looked puzzled.

"Only to think of it, Helen," cried Dolores, putting away the glass and the empty plate, and settling herself in a more comfortable position, her feet on the fender.

"Think of what, dear?"

"To think," and she laughed again her merriest peal, "to think how he used to go on in Spain."

"In Spain? Then you have seen him before?"

"Of course I have. Didn't he come, night after night, hammering away on that wretched violin, and didn't I laugh myself nearly into fits, as I lay and listened!"

"Dolores," said Helen, more anxiously still, "tell me who is he? What is his name?"

"Why, he's himself, Helen, for that matter," replied Dolores, in her most saucy and flippant tone; "and for the rest, if you must know, his name is Archibald Cranstead."

"What! Cranstead of the abbey?" asked Helen, under her breath.

"I don't know any other Cransteads, and I was not aware that you did," replied Dolores, rising, and giving vent to a prodigious yawn. "Come, Helen, I want to go to bed."

"Dolores, I am very grieved about your having danced, and also—"

"I know—I know. You can spare your breath, Helen. He's much too great a fright for me! I like people who are good-looking."

"But, Dolores, my child," began Helen again, earnestly.

"Good night, Helen, and don't trouble your wise head about me. I can take care of my own lovers. You have enough to do with Joyce."

The rude handling of the wound unnerved her. She turned aside to hide her tears. In the interval, Dolores had skipped gaily up-stairs to bed. Helen slept in a room adjoining her father's, to be in close attendance upon him. Dolores, who, as she said, hated to be disturbed, occupied the apartment adjoining.

But Helen had scarce laid her weary head upon her pillow, when a sound caused her to look up. By the light of the lamp, which was kept burning on account of the invalid, she beheld a little white figure stealing in at the door. It was Dolores.

"Helen, darling!" and she crept into her sister's bed. "I have been very naughty. I quite forgot about Joyce."

Helen gave a suppressed sob.

"I quite forgot it, dear. I am such a giddy little thing. Is he really going to India?"

Helen gave another smothered sob.

"Helen," said Dolores, laying her soft cheek against her sister's, "I will be so good! I will do all I can to comfort you. I told Joyce I should."

Helen only replied by a silent embrace.

"You must not get up when papa rings. I will get up, Helen. I am come on purpose. You must rest your poor head; how hot it is! I am sure it

must ache very bad. Poor Helen," said Dolores, soothingly.

Helen did not answer. She could not. But this little act of sympathy was very comforting. It was comforting, even though in five minutes Dolores was soundly and healthily asleep. Soundly asleep, when in the dim light of the January morning, Helen awoke, and left her, still wrapt in peaceful, unbroken slumbers. No sorrow had as yet touched the light heart of Dolores. All that was to come!

(To be continued.)

I N A C H U R C H Y A R D.

AND here it is our sorrow,
And cares, and trials end;
And here it is we borrow
The peace life may not lend.

Oh, graves of the departed,
The rich, the great, the small,
The gay, the broken-hearted,
How still and silent all!

Here lies the gentle mother,
Her days of watching done;
The sister and the brother,
The weak and wayward son.
Here lies the erring daughter,
The fair and only child;
The father, too, who sought her
In anguish deep and wild!

Here rests the simple maiden,
The husband kind and true,
The lover gay, joy-laden,
The smiling infant too.
Here, here they learn the sequel
To care and human strife;
And here, too, they are equal,
The bitter foes in life.

And here, too, shall they slumber,
Forgotten year by year,
Till record of their number
From earth shall disappear;
Till God shall wake the sleepers,
And wipe all tears away,
And joy shall fill the weepers
At dawning of that day.

MATTIAS BARR.

HOW LITTLE POLLY CONQUERED THE BEAR.

A STORY FOR LITTLE GIRLS.

LIT was nearly four o'clock on a Sunday afternoon, and school was almost over. The teachers had finished their lessons; the Bibles and Testaments were closed, and being collected to put away. "Now, girls," said one teacher to her class of little Testament-readers, "cannot each of you try, during the week, to bring a new scholar to the school next Sunday? No matter whether it is a boy or a girl; do your best to gain at least one. Will you promise me, my dears?"

A general murmur followed this appeal. "I will ma'am?" "So will I, teacher;" "And I," and so on round the class, until the teacher's eye met the timid, downcast glance of her new scholar, little Polly James. "But if you please ma'm," pleaded Polly, "I've only lived here a few weeks, and I don't know anybody yet."

"Still, Polly, you will give me your word that you will try," replied the lady; "will you not?"

"Yes, ma'am," said Polly, with a not very hopeful look; *I will try.*"

As the little girl walked slowly home that afternoon through the long, quiet lane which led to it,

her mind was busily set to work to think what she should do to find a new scholar by next Sunday. She could not remember any children who did not go to school already, except those belonging to the blacksmith; but they never had spoken to her yet, and she felt too shy to speak to them first. Beginning to despair, she said, half-aloud to herself, "It's no use thinking any more about it; I'm kept so much indoors, to help poor mother, that I hardly ever see anybody to speak to, and I don't like talking to strange children."

Polly now tried to divert her thoughts by looking at the picture text-card, which was given to her, on leaving her class, for early attendance. As she did so, a verse in gay-coloured letters caught her eye, and she read these words: "Ask, and it shall be given; seek, and ye shall find." "What a nice text!" she thought; "it seems as if Jesus were saying those very words to me now—to tell me the best way of getting another scholar." Her face brightened up at the new idea which had just entered her mind, and she made haste home to talk to her mother about it.

She soon reached her little cottage door, and, opening it herself by lifting the latch, she went in.

Her mother was comfortably seated by the fireside, with a large open Bible upon her knees. Little Polly walked softly up-stairs to the bedroom, and so avoided disturbing her mother, whose chief comfort she knew was found in reading God's Word. There was, indeed, little besides in her humble abode to care much about, except three bright medals hanging over the high mantelshelf. At these she often looked with satisfaction, as memorials of her husband's true devotion to his queen and country, in whose service he had often fought, and at last died.

After carefully putting by her Sunday bonnet and cloak, little Polly, who was quite alone, knelt down at her bedside, and, putting her hands together, she said, "Lord, help me to find some little boy or girl to take with me to school next Sunday. I'm afraid to speak to those I don't know; but do, Lord, make me bold to ask some strange child to come with me and hear my dear teacher talk about Jesus. Amen."

She rose up from her knees, and went down-stairs with her text-card in her hand. Her mother looked at it; and they both talked together a long while about the nice text which had pleased Polly so much.

Next morning, the small shop which was kept in the front part of the cottage was opened, and the widow, with her child's help, replaced in the tiny window the few things which had been taken out on Saturday night. These were a little fruit, some new-laid eggs, a few herrings, and a jar or two of sweet-meats.

In the course of the day, Polly was sent out with a basket of eggs to a lady's house at the other end of the village, about half a mile off. The nearest way was across the fields. So Polly, who wanted to sell the eggs as soon as she could, got over the stile, and was walking briskly along the path, through the middle of a turnip-field, when she met "the Bear." He was neither a white bear, nor a black bear, nor a brown bear; but Polly knew the surly, rough-looking youth who was slowly coming towards her was almost as savage as either of them, and that everybody called him "the bear of the village." She suddenly stopped, as if considering whether to go on or go back; but, seeing him begin to run at her, she stepped aside from the path, to get out of his way. Another minute, he came close up to her, and, pushing himself violently against her, upset her basket. The eggs were strewn on the ground, and many of them broken. "The Bear," seeing her distress seemed pleased, and stood and grinned at the mischief he had done. But, before Polly had gathered up the few unbroken eggs that were left on the ground, and had put them back in the basket, a man came up, and, seeing what was the matter, began in a great rage to scold "the Bear," and threatened to take him off to be locked up; and was just going to lay hold of him when Polly begged the man to let him go, saying, "Perhaps he didn't mean to do any harm—only to frighten me a little; and I hope he will be sorry for what he has done. He didn't know I was a poor widow's girl, and had some eggs in my basket to sell to get us some bread. I don't wish

you to hurt him; pray leave him alone." Polly was so earnest in her entreaties to save the Bear the flogging which he knew that he deserved, that bear as he was, he could hardly help wondering at her concern for him; and the man, whose stick in his uplifted hand was ready to deal a heavy blow upon his broad back, withdrew himself in disgust at what he thought her silliness, saying, "If you are such a soft as not to let me thrash the fellow for breaking your eggs, I can't help it;" and off he went, the Bear sullenly and slowly following him.

Polly, now, with the remainder of her eggs, started off again, and reached the house where they were to be sold in a few minutes. She found on counting them, more than a dozen had been lost through the fall, and felt almost ashamed to take the small odd number nine to sell. But knowing how badly some money was wanted at home, she mustered up courage to present herself and her few eggs at the lady's house. The housekeeper looked surprised when she opened the basket, in which she expected to find at least a dozen or two, and asked how it was she had brought such a handful. Polly told of the accident, as she chose to term it, and took care to screen "the Bear" from as much blame as she could. Being a kind-hearted woman, she sympathised with the child, and took the eggs, giving her the price of a dozen, by adding a few pence from her own pocket. She also gave her two or three ripe apples to eat as she went home.

Little Polly returned homewards, and when she had nearly reached the stile at the further end of the fields, she saw again the same ugly Bear she had met with before, sitting upon it, idly whistling. She felt at first rather vexed to see him there, and wondered what she should do to avoid him. But soon another thought entered her mind, and she walked straight up to him, holding up to him in her hand two of the rosy-cheeked apples which had been just given to her; and, with a gentle look and earnest tone, she said to him, "Here, you may have these if you like; I don't want them, for we have more at home." And seeing him hold back his hand, as if rather ashamed of himself, she said, "Never mind the eggs, you won't do so again; but do please take these apples, and tell me if you will go with me to school next Sunday."

"Well," he muttered, taking one of the apples from her hand, and beginning to munch it with his big teeth: "you're a good little un; I don't mind if I do." And then jumping over the stile, he let Polly pass over too.

"Before you go," she said, "I must ask you to be ready for me at the end of the lane, near the school, a few minutes before ten o'clock next Sunday morning."

"All right," he gruffly answered, "I'll be there waiting for you in good time;" and then she wished him "good-bye," and they parted.

Polly went home with a quick step and a light heart, for though she had lost some eggs, she had found what she had been "asking" and "seeking"

for so earnestly, and she felt sure she had not done so in vain. And now she longed for Sunday to come again, to take her strange companion with her, and tell her teacher she had brought her another new scholar.

When the wished-for Sunday morning came at last, little Polly made haste to meet "the Bear," as she still called him, for she knew him by no other name, and felt, indeed, that his rough looks and manners were well suited to it. Arrived at the place of meeting, she saw a group of girls and boys, whose eyes were all staring at one object—"the Bear." He was slowly sauntering up and down the middle of the road, with his hands in his pockets, looking for Polly. She soon came up to him, looking very much pleased, and, with a cheerful "good morning," she asked him to come along with her to see her teacher. With a sort of grunt and a grin, meaning consent, he turned round and followed with the other children, who were flocking in at the school door.

Polly kept as close to him as she could, and brought him to her class amid the whispers and wondering gaze of all the children. The teacher, who had just taken her seat, looked up with surprise first at little Polly and then at her companion, and could hardly believe her own eyes when she recognised in him the well-known "Bear."

"Please, teacher," said Polly, timidly, "I have brought you the only scholar I could get; and I hope you will like to have him in your class."

"Oh, my dear, I am quite pleased to see you have brought with you a new scholar. I am very sure you have been doing your best to keep the promise you made to me last Sunday—but he should go into the boys' school."

The next day, in the evening, as little Polly was fetching some milk from a farmhouse in the village, she was met again by "the Bear," who was returning home from work at the butcher's; and, coming up to

her, he held out sixpence to her, and asked her to take it for the broken eggs, telling her, if that wasn't enough, he would make up the rest another time. She thanked him very warmly, and told him she would give it to her poor mother, who was in need of it. And that is how Polly conquered "the Bear."

But he is not a Bear now. W. H.

ANSWER TO SCRIPTURE ACROSTIC ON PAGE 559.

"Elah."—1 Kings xvi. 1—10.

1. E unice.....	2 Tim. i. 5.
2. L uke	Col. iv. 14.
3. A holib	Ezek. xxiii. 4.
4. H alah	2 Kings xvii. 6.

SCRIPTURE ENIGMA.

1. Where Absalom for three years safety found.	
2. The rock where Judah's men their champion bound.	
3. Where Samson saw his false and treacherous wife.	
4. Where lost Abimelech his worthless life.	
5. Where twelve of Joab's men with Abner's fought.	
6. The month the ark was to the temple brought.	
7. A king whom Pharaoh crowned and changed his name.	
8. What king for kindness insult gave and shame?	
9. Who, with his king, Philistine's host defied?	
10. Where David was with food and arms supplied.	
11. Whose son was stoned for taking things accursed?	
12. Who risked his life to save his king from thirst?	
13. Who the foundations of God's temple laid?	
14. Who was by Absalom his captain made?	
15. Who was by Sargon against Ashdod sent?	
16. Where abode Ezra three days in a tent.	
17. Before what god, while worshipping in vain, Was Syria's king by his two children slain?	

When sorely tempted, with these words

Our Lord his foe defied;

Our tempter too would flee, if we

More on our God relied.

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